



**Free Clinic**

OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

*Compassionate Care ~ Always*

# The Examiner

WINTER/SPRING 2019

## VOLUNTEERING-GREAT FOR OTHERS AND FOR YOU



There's a growing body of evidence that helping others can also improve your health. It seems that we are wired to need a connection with others, and that giving back is a great way to feel that bond. According to a recent study, providing care to others even confers a longevity benefit to the provider. This is great news for the hundreds of volun-

teers who help ensure the Free Clinic is here to deliver compassionate, high quality care for our community, every day. There is a definite camaraderie among the volunteers at each clinic, whether they are assisting with patient check-in, helping room patients and completing charts, or checking vital signs. Some volunteers do not work directly with patients, but contribute by helping with information systems, business processes, fundraising and in many other important ways. Other volunteers are able to help by contributing their financial resources to the Free Clinic. However we volunteer, we are all part of a special community, helping others.

One of our project access patients exemplifies how our community comes together to help others. In project access, Free Clinic staff coordinate free access to specialty medical care, including hospital services, for more complex patient needs. Our patient, Tomas (his name is changed for privacy), has two school-age children and has lived in Clark County for over 20 years. He works steadily as a cook, but cannot afford health insurance, and he does not qualify for Medicaid. Tomas earns slightly over the federal poverty level for a family of four. He has come to the clinic several times over the years for minor ailments. Concerning symptoms at his last visit lead



our volunteer physician to recommend a GI consultation with Vancouver Clinic. A Vancouver Clinic physician performed a colonoscopy at Legacy Salmon Creek Hospital. Based on the findings, a PeaceHealth Medical Group surgeon has performed two surgeries at PeaceHealth Hospital. Tomas is now receiving chemotherapy and on-going care at PeaceHealth Medical Group. Tomas and his daughters are extremely grateful for the free and compassionate care he is receiving. A local medical supplier is assisting this family with medical supplies. We have helped Tomas sign up for a government program that will help PeaceHealth recoup some of the cost of providing chemotherapy. Our Free Clinic project access coordinators have worked diligently to ensure Tomas receives the care he needs, in a timely manner, and to help Tomas and his family navigate our complex world of healthcare. Sometimes, Tomas or his daughters just need someone to talk with, who understand what they are going through, and our project access coordinators are there to offer support. It is impressive that so many of our local medical organizations have come together to support Tomas, each volunteering their expertise and resources to help give Tomas the best chance at more years with his family.

We are extremely grateful for the support the Free Clinic and our patients receive from our many volunteers, local medical organizations, and financial donors. Thank you for helping us serve patients like Tomas, and we hope that you too experience the joy that comes from being a part of this special community.

Ann Wheelock  
Executive Director

Dawn Tolotti  
President, Board of Directors